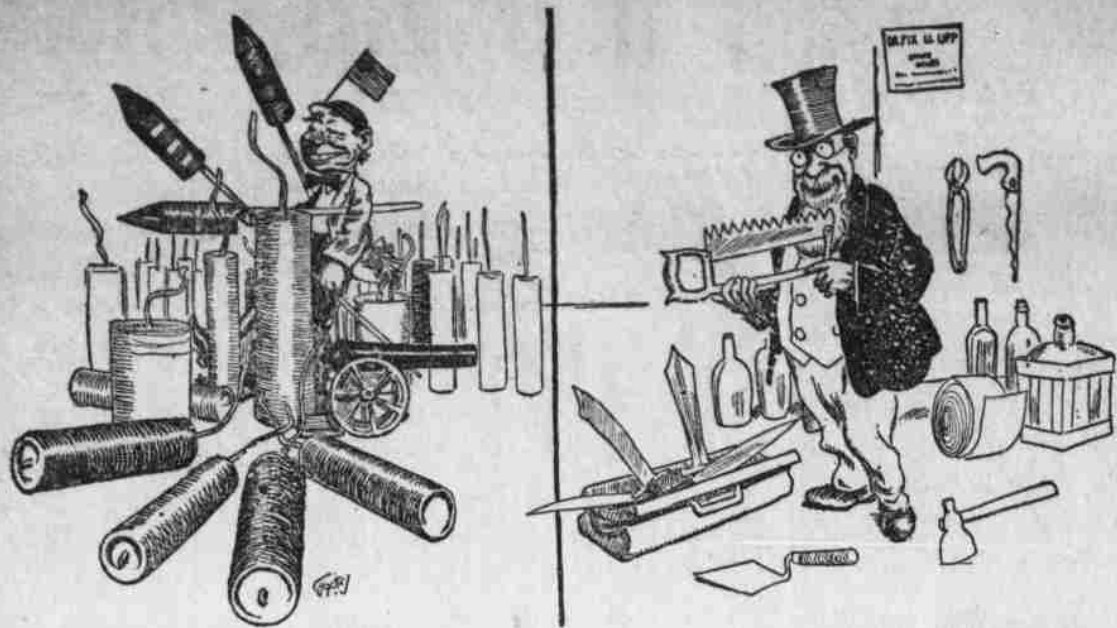


ALL READY



Mickey Finn's Big Fire Cracker

The explosion that wound up the Fourth of July Celebration on Cooney Island.

Two mammoth firecrackers stood in the window of Casey's grocery. They were 12 inches long and proportionately thick.

For a month before the Fourth of July these gigantic indicators of enthusiasm had stood in the window like British soldiers on dress parade, while a predatory spider hung a filmy hammock between them and calmly killed his buzzing victims over two powder mines.

The firecrackers were the admiration and the envy of all the boys in Cooney Island. It was seldom that a youthful nose was not flattened against the window pane in ardent covetousness.

But the price demanded by Casey for the thunderers was prohibitive, so far as the boys were concerned, and there was not one of them patriotic or courageous enough to invest 25 cents in a single ecstatic explosion.

Said Mickey Finn timidly one evening when he had been sent by his mother to get a quarter of a pound of tea and half a pound of pork:

"Mr. Casey, I suppose now, that when you're 'thin big fellows' wint off it would blow the stars out of the sky?" his mind filled with blisful thoughts of mighty explosions.

Casey stopped measuring out a half pint of New Orleans molasses, raised a monitor finger, and replied:

"Mickey, my boy, I'd be afeard to tell you what would happen if I stood wint o' 'thin big fellows out on the sidewalk and touched the stem wint the lighted end of a five cent cigar. The noise would be terrible, terrible, my son. 'Twould make your head ring like an anvil, and you would see sparks like fireflies."

"Would it blow the house down?" asked the boy in an awed whisper.

"No, I don't think it would," said Casey. "It might shake the chimney down and break all the glass in the



In Ardent Covetousness.

windows in small pieces, and there would be paper in the streets as would fill an empty barrel o' flour. Oh, but thin big fellows is mighty powerful, Mickey, mighty powerful. They

use them in China to kill murderers and robbers. They put wint o' 'thin big firecrackers bechune the teeth of a murderer and make him light the fuse wint his own hand and blow his own head off. Thin Chinese is mighty cool, Mickey, mighty cool."

This vivid description inflamed Mickey's desire, which was Casey's motive in telling it, for the incident occurred on the eve of the Fourth, and Casey was afraid that the big firecrackers would be carried over the national holiday and remain a loss on his hands. In order to deepen the impression already made upon the boy Casey permitted him to handle one of the twigs.

The boy's eyes had widened to their utmost capacity when he was outside the window, but now that he could feel the red jacket his hands trembled with the eagerness of possession and he would have given ten times his life to own it.

"Take it along wint you, Mickey," said Casey, cajolingly. "Thin crackers were made in Chow Chow, in China, for the Cooney Island trade, and I want to get rid of thin I have on hand before I send another order to Wan Lung, the haythin."

"But I have no money," said Mickey sorrowfully. "My father is goin' to give me three bunches of little firecrackers and a pinwheel, but I know he wouldn't buy wint o' 'thin big firecrackers for me."

"Well," continued Casey, "you come down here to-morrow mornin' and carry in a half ton of coal for me and I'll give you the big cracker."

The next morning Mickey was busy for two hours carrying chestnut coal in a nail keg and dumping it in Casey's cellar. Just after noon, with a smile covered with coal dust and a bosom full of chuckles, he received his prize.

No grass grew under his bare feet as he ran homeward, the precious powder mine clasped to his bosom. Holding the big firecracker aloft as he darted through the kitchen door, he exclaimed:

"Mother, I have it! Ain't it a beauty?"

"Well, I don't see anything about it to be makin' a fuss over," said Mrs. Finn, who, like most mothers, had no love for fireworks. "Now, don't be bringin' it nearer to me, as Mickey ran toward her. 'I don't want to be blown into the middle o' next week. Throw the dirty thing away! I'm afeared o' me life while you have it in your hands! Now, don't be goin' near the stove wint it! Arrah, ye little spalpeen, wint ye take it off the stove? Take it off afore ye blow the roof off the house!" and the frightened woman ran into the bedroom and peered through the keyhole.

With the recklessness of boyhood, Mickey exclaimed, as he lit a match and reduced his mother to hysterics by pretending to light the firecracker stem:

"You needn't be afeared, mother. I'll nip it out afore it goes off."

In this simple fashion the afternoon of the Fourth passed away in the Finn household varied by the boy with occasional visits to the neighbors, whom he threw into a panic of fear by pretending to light the big explosive.

Mrs. Murphy and her three children were gathered around the kitchen table when Mickey placed the lighted mammoth in the middle of the table. Two of the boys went head first through the window, while Mrs. Murphy tried to crawl under the kitchen stove.

All this excitement afforded the boy a good deal of delight, but he reserved for the evening the culmination of his joy. He intended to blow his father up as he sat in his chair on the back stoop.

Mickey thought it would be an inspiring sight to witness his father flying across the back yard and plowing up the ground with his nose. In order that he might have an audience appropriate to so great an occasion, Mickey had spread the news among all the boys of the neighborhood, and at nine o'clock 50 boys sat on the fence surrounding the back yard. Mr. Finn, tired of the excitement of the

day, had fallen asleep in his rocking chair on the back stoop, when Mickey lit the stem of the big cracker and placed it carefully under his father's chair.

The moon shone brightly, illuminating the grin on every boy's face. Every ear was strained to catch the faint hissing of the fuse and every eye intent upon the sleeping man.

The fuse burned itself out, and the silence and suspense was deepening.



Had Fallen Asleep.

A minute passed and another, until Mickey could stand the strain no longer. He reached down and lifted the firecracker from beneath the chair.

As he held it up in the moonlight to examine it, a mosquito lit upon his father's nose and the old gentleman awoke. Grabbing the firecracker from his son's hand he arose and holding it aloft, he said:

"Boys, there will be no explosion to-night. I'm sorry to disappoint you. I was afeared that Mickey might do some harm wint that big cracker, so when he wasn't lookin' this afternoon I took the powder out of it and filled it wint clay. So, you see that the show is over, and ye may as well go home and go to bed. There'll be no more explosions until I give Mickey wint a shingle afore I turn in. Good night to ye all. Come around some other night when there is somethin' doin'."

FOURTH OF JULY DON'TS.

Don't allow the children to bend over fireworks which will not "go off." They sometimes do it unexpectedly with unfortunate results to the little meddler.

Don't neglect to send for a physician at once in the case of a serious burn, to prevent a possible scar or worse still, blood poisoning, from ignorant or improper treatment of the wound.

Don't forget to have some remedies for burns at hand. When the skin is not broken by a burn scrape a raw potato, place on a piece of soft linen and use as a poultice. Bicarbonate of soda—the ordinary baking soda—is excellent for burns whether the skin is broken or not. If broken apply the dry soda, if unbroken dampen the soda with water to make a paste and apply to the spot. The pain will be instantly relieved.

Don't leave the windows of a town house open if it is to be left for the day. Stray rockets and sparks may find an entrance.

Good Advice.

Keep the window open and send for the doctor.

TOO YOUNG FOR A STICK.

Why Boy Would Have Nothing to Do with His Lemonade.

"It was at a children's treat in the country," said the Settlement worker with pink cheeks and unbounded enthusiasm, "and lemonade and edibles were being supplied to a collection of small children who looked, for the most part, like babies and were as sophisticated as I don't know what to say. As I walked around to see that everyone was getting enough to eat and drink I came to one infant whose mug of lemonade had not been touched apparently. I observed that there was a little twig from one of the trees floating on the top, but they are not fastidious as a rule and it did not occur to me that he objected to the proof that he was playing under real trees."

"Why don't you drink the lemonade, little brother?" said I. "Isn't it sweet and nice? Don't you like it?" He wriggled a bit and rubbed his ear on his shoulder in a delightful state of embarrassment, and then with a knowing twinkle he said: "I guess, teacher, I'm too little to drink lemonade wint a stick in it."—N. Y. Times.

INSURANCE INVESTMENTS.

How One Company's Assets Are Distributed in the South and West.

In connection with its withdrawal from Texas, along with many other companies, rather than to submit to the new law which requires that 75% of the reserves on Texas policies shall be invested in securities of that state, which securities shall be deposited in the state and subjected to heavy taxation, in addition to the large tax now imposed on life insurance premiums, the Equitable Life Assurance Society has made public the distribution of its assets, at the end of the second year of the new management. The Equitable now has \$10,958,000 invested in Texas, which is twice as much as the new law requires, but the management decided that to submit to the additional taxation would be an injustice to its policyholders in other states, which impose no such penalty on the thrift of their citizens.

The Equitable's report shows that more than 37% of its total reserves are now invested in the southern and western states, while only 35% of its total insurance is carried in these states. Its investments are distributed as follows: Ala., \$3,099,000; Ark., \$974,000; Cal., \$4,038,000; Col., \$5,142,000; Fla., \$4,924,000; Ga., \$4,048,000; Idaho, \$5,197,000; Ill., \$12,617,000; Ind. Ter., \$443,000; Iowa, \$6,826,000; Kan., \$3,690,000; Ky., \$2,631,000; La., \$3,054,000; Md., \$2,207,000; Mich., \$6,009,000; Minn., \$2,065,000; Miss., \$757,000; Mo., \$8,197,000; Mont., \$1,890,000; Neb., \$1,526,000; Nev., \$640,000; New Mex., \$1,876,000; N. C., \$1,649,000; N. D., \$677,000; Ohio, \$11,634,000; Okla., \$1,006,000; Ore., \$1,158,000; S. C., \$975,000; S. D., \$1,305,000; Tenn., \$1,909,000; Utah, \$2,134,000; Va., \$6,592,000; Wash., \$1,202,000; W. Va., \$5,523,000; Wis., \$2,342,000; Wyo., \$3,367,000.

BATHING IN THE DEAD SEA.

By No Means a Pleasure, According to One Traveler.

"No sooner has one plunged into the water than one is whelped off one's feet and goes bobbing helplessly about like a wretched cork," says Rev. Haskett Smith of bathing in the Dead Sea. "In the effort to regain one's footing and to get back to shore, one's feet and shins are barked by the jagged stones and pebbles, and when at length one does emerge from its treacherous bosom, with the lower limbs bleeding and torn, one becomes aware of a horrible tingling and burning sensation in eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and almost every pore of the skin, from the brine and bitumen which have penetrated everywhere."

"Unless great care is taken the bather in the Dead sea is liable to an eruption, which breaks out all over his body, and which is commonly known as the 'Dead sea rash.' The best antidote to this is to hurry across as quickly as possible to the river Jordan and take a second plunge therein. The soft and muddy waters of that sacred but dirty stream will effectually remove the salt that has incrustated the body."

To Tell of Royal Scandal.

A book is soon to appear in Dresden, entitled "A Fight for a Royal Child." The author is Ida Kremer. She tells of her experiences as governess in the house of the Countess Montignoso until she was obliged to depart by order of the court marshal of the king of Saxony.

COFFEE COMPLEXION.

Many Ladies Have Poor Complexions from Coffee.

"Coffee caused dark colored blotches on my face and body. I had been drinking it for a long while and these blotches gradually appeared, until finally they became permanent and were about as dark as coffee itself."

"I formerly had as fine a complexion as one could ask for."

"When I became convinced that coffee was the cause of my trouble, I changed and took to using Postum Food Coffee, and as I made it well, according to directions, I liked it very much, and have since that time used it in place of coffee."

"I am thankful to say I am not nervous any more, as I was when I was drinking coffee, and my complexion is now as fair and good as it was years ago. It is very plain that coffee caused the trouble."

Most bad complexions are caused by some disturbance of the stomach and coffee is the greatest disturber of digestion known. Almost any woman can have a fair complexion if she will leave off coffee and use Postum Food Coffee and nutritious, healthy food in proper quantity. Postum furnishes certain elements from the natural grains from the field that Nature uses to rebuild the nervous system and when that is in good condition, one can depend upon a good complexion as well as a good healthy body.

"There's a Reason," Read, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Didn't Always Refuse.

"I've tried to discourage Mr. Nerve from calling on you," snapped the stern parent, "but the young scamp refuses to be sat upon."

"Why, father, you do him an injustice," indignantly replied the dear girl.—Kansas City Times.

What He Wants.

When a man seeks your advice he generally wants your praise.—Chester Field.

WON BY A CAMERA

By Catherine S. Long

(Copyright, by Joseph B. Bowles.)

Hepburn lighted his ruby lamp and sat down before his developing tray. He was an enthusiastic student of photography.

"This settles it," he declared with emphasis, as he removed the last plate from the box. "I shan't buy any more supplies of Sanford when I get back to the city. There's a limit to the demands that can be made upon friendship. Here I've been buying plates of him ever since I begin to take pictures, and what have I got to show for whole dozens of them but just such crazy things as these? I'm afraid Sanford will never be a business success."

He shook his head dubiously, as he placed the twelfth plate in the hypo. Photography is a capricious mistress, and has a fashion of springing surprises upon her devotees. Hepburn was soon aware that there was something about this plate quite different from any that he had ever tried to develop. Slowly the image appeared, but there was a clearness about it, coupled with the evolution of unfamiliar outlines, that puzzled him. There was the picture of the mill-pond, clear, yet soft, a negative such as he had often dreamed of making. But back of this picture was another. It was—oh, strange and entrancing sight!—that of the most beautiful woman that he had ever seen. Hepburn stared hard. Hepburn almost trembled as he carefully washed the plate, and set it on the rack to dry.

After breakfast next morning he sauntered out as usual with his camera. He had no appreciation whatever of the scenes through which he wandered, when, turning a bend in the path, he came quite unexpectedly upon a scene of such wild and romantic beauty that it at once appealed to his carefully-fostered artistic and photographic sense. The little stream, here running swift and deep, crept into a sheltered cove, over which the foliage drooped in long and graceful festoons, and its slender current was spanned by an old moss-grown log.

"Beautiful!" murmured Hepburn, looking about him critically. "Why, this is just such an arrangement as I've been looking for ever since I studied 'Pictorial Effect in Photography.'"

Even as he spoke a woman emerged from the forest and began to cross the mossy log. She hesitated before she had taken many steps, and remained standing in what was an unconscious, but what would seem a premeditated beautiful pose.

Hepburn could have shouted with delight. "Perfect!" he exclaimed. "Now if I can only get it before she moves farther. Absolutely perfect!"

While he was preparing to take her picture a blood-curdling scream smote his ears. Turning quickly, he was horrified to observe that the support for the wedge had disappeared, and instantly he surmised that the girl had fallen into the water.

Hepburn did not hesitate, but sprang forth into the stream. The girl once more arose to the surface and promptly went herself about him, totally incapacitating him as to the use of all his members.

"Let go!" he yelled, "or you'll sink us both!" But the girl continued to twine and clutch. Then Hepburn did a cruel and ungentle thing, which only the exigencies of the occasion could excuse. He grappled with the girl. Partially disengaging his left hand, he attempted to thrust her away from him in order to get a hold upon her untrammelled by her grasp, but he only succeeded in dealing her a terrific blow in the face with his elbow. The woman of the double negative, stunned into unconsciousness, relaxed her hold, and with a gasping sigh went down again. After that it was easy. Hepburn was not a practical swimmer, but he had no difficulty in towing the senseless woman to the shore only a few strokes away. Arrived there, he lifted her carefully up the bank and laid her on the grass. Then he regarded the still white form ruefully. The water streamed from her clinging draperies, mingled with the blood which had begun to run down her face.

Soon the girl opened her eyes. She fixed them meditatively upon him for a moment, then she sat up. She looked at her streaming skirts, and put her hand to her bruised face, over which a shroud of annoyance flitted. "You hit me," she declared resentfully.

"I know it," acknowledged Hepburn dolefully. "I can't tell you how sorry I am. But it seemed to be the only way. You hung on so we would have both drowned in four feet of water if I hadn't. You could have stood on your feet there if you had tried. It was very stupid of you not to. But it is awful to think that I should have struck you. You—you of all persons!"

"Me, of all persons," cried the girl of the double negative. "Why do you say such a thing as that? I don't know you from Adam."

"Because, because," said Hepburn wildly, "I love you, I love you! I have loved you ever since I saw your picture last night, but it seems to me now as if I had always loved you."

"The girl arose from the grass with an expression of profound disgust upon her features. "Well, of all incomprehensible things!" she exclaimed. "You are certainly the most impudent man I ever saw. How dare you say such a thing to me? What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Hepburn desperately, "that I don't care what things you say to me now, if only some time you will marry me."

The girl of the double negative spoke never a word, but with tight-lipped lips gathered her skirts in both hands and began to walk rapidly away.

For over a week he saw nothing of Miss Carrington. That young lady remained in her room nursing a nose, formerly of classic proportions, and an eye which resembled a boiled gooseberry, sunk deep in the brilliant and varied hues of a summer sunset. Her indisposition did not, however, prevent her from inspecting "that horrid man" from behind her curtains, and secretly commenting upon the facts that he was certainly very good looking, and that he took sly peeps at her window as he passed.

If she had expected a repetition of Mr. Hepburn's former frenzied conduct when she again appeared in the corridors of the hotel she was disappointed. At first he seemed not to even see her. Then after they were introduced by a mutual friend, he treated her with the grave courtesy which a happy instinct told him would be most pleasing to a young lady with a high regard for the conventionalities of polite society.

It was only towards the close of the season, and when preparations were being made by her family to return to the city that, piqued by his indifference, she began to unbend a little. They met often, then, often, then walked together. They discovered that they had many points of interest in common, although photography was not one of them.

"You see," explained Miss Carrington, "my brother takes pictures, and one crank of that kind is enough in a family."

One warm September evening they walked upon the almost deserted piazza of the hotel in the moonlight, and it seemed to Hepburn that the hour was ripe at last. Ardently, but this time with dignity and decorum, he told her again of his love. Memories of that other proposal must, however, have returned to the lady's mind, for she drew herself up haughtily and said:

"I am surprised and sorry, Mr. Hepburn, that you should so have misunderstood my sentiments toward you. I esteem and respect you, but I do not love you. I cannot marry you, but I will be a sister."

"Miss Carrington paused and blushed. It was the regulation formula which she had tendered to more than one callow youth, but it was too obvious a chestnut to offer to a man of Mr. Hepburn's character and experience. To her utter amazement, he seemed to entertain no sensation of chagrin or disappointment. Instead, he drew her only half-resisting form into his arms, and for the second time in their short acquaintance pressed a kiss upon her brow.

Again she intimated angrily, as she had once before done: "You are certainly the most presumptuous man I ever heard of! Don't you understand me? I said no!"

Hepburn's face beamed with joy and satisfaction. "My sweetest girl," he said, gayly, repeating the oscillation, "I hear you. But don't you remember that you learned long ago when you were in school that a double negative is always equal to an affirmative? This is the second time you've turned me down. What other conclusion can I draw?"

"That evening, when the happy man was again alone in his room, he found in close proximity to the fateful piece of glass a letter placed there by the bell-boy, and bearing a special delivery stamp. It read as follows:

"Dear Hepburn—Did you take away with the rest of the stuff you bought of me last summer an opened box of 4x5 dry plates? If so, for heaven's sake, return them at once. I hope you haven't monkeyed with and spoiled them. They were left here by a young fellow—Billy Carrington—to be developed, and he is rendering the earth because they can't be found. Wire if you have them. Yours, "SANFORD."

Hepburn smiled, with some concern on his features, however. "What a careless fellow Sanford is," he said; "I always insisted that he would never make a business success. Still, he admitted, without a shadow of reluctance, 'he does keep pretty good plates.'"

To Preserve Hood's Birthplace. A meeting convened by the Leyton Ratepayers' association, held at Leytonstone, has decided to appeal for funds with which to secure Lake House estate. Lake House, in which the poet Hood was born and lived till early manhood, stands on the confines of Wanstead Flats, near Leytonstone.

The house and estate have recently been acquired for building purposes, but local feeling is strongly against the project, it being felt that the house should be preserved for the sake of its associations, while the grounds would make charming pleasure gardens.—London Daily News.

Overheard at the Circus. "Did you know that the strong lady and the contortionist were going to be married?"

"Oh, are they? I suppose she'll be able to twist him around her finger now."

—Chicago Record-Herald.

MRS. DE PASSE OF NEW YORK CITY

"I Consulted Several Physicians, but they Did Me No Good. Peruna and Man-a-lin Helped Me."



MRS. ALINE DEPASSE.

Mrs. Aline DePasse, 770 E. 165th St., New York, N. Y., writes:

"It gives me pleasure to testify to the curative qualities of Peruna and Man-a-lin."

"I was afflicted for over seven years with catarrh of the head, throat and digestive organs. I consulted many physicians, but they did me no good. One day I happened to read some testimonials in your Peruna Almanac. I decided to try Peruna and Man-a-lin. I bought a bottle of each, and after taking them for a week I noticed a change for the better. So I kept it up, and after using twelve bottles I was perfectly cured."

"I also gave the medicine to my children and they had the same beneficial result. I would never be without these remedies in the house."

"I highly recommend Peruna and Man-a-lin to all my friends, and in fact to everybody."

Miss Mildred Grey, 110 Welmar St., Appleton, Wis., writes:

"It gives me pleasure to recommend Peruna for catarrh of the stomach. I had this disease for a number of years, and could not enjoy a mouthful of food that I ate. It was indeed a great relief when I hit upon Peruna, and obtained decided results from the first. I took six bottles before I felt entirely cured of my trouble, but I had an aggravated case."

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